

2006 Montana Small Business Person of the Year and First Runner-up National Small Business Person of the Year



Andrew Field
Founder/President
PrintingForLess.com
211 East Geyser
Livingston, MT 59047
(406) 222-4890
info@printingforless.com
www.printingforless.com

Andrew Field is a serial entrepreneur, starting in the printing industry in 1976; he is currently at work in his third successful start-up business. After moving to Livingston, Montana, from the Twin Cities in 1990, Andrew began an entrepreneurial journey that would take him from a local garage to the boundless limits of cyberspace. First, he started a successful automotive service business, which he sold when he secured a wholesale automotive chemical distribution business, American Automotive Supply. After winning top awards for sales 5 out of 6 years, Andrew turned over operations of American Automotive to his wife so he could devote efforts to growing another new start-up company.

While fly fishing on the Yellowstone River in Montana one day, a fishing buddy lamented that the print shop he worked for was shutting down. Intrigued by a new challenge, Andrew decided to launch a print shop of his own. Andrew's affinity for the printing industry began when he learned to run a press in high school and got a job at a local print shop. He envisioned a new enterprise printing brochures and catalogs for small business owners across the state and in October 1996, founded Express Color Printing to serve the Montana printing market. He started with six people and \$500,000 in equipment. Two years later, sales were about \$50,000 a month, roughly break-even, and growth appeared limited. After discovering that Montana had more elk and bison than print buyers, he embarked on a new mission that would expand far beyond Montana.

One day a frustrated customer asked Andrew to print a brochure he created in Microsoft software. It seemed that no one else locally was able to do it and it got him thinking about a huge untapped market. He realized that as entrepreneurs became more tech-savvy using mainstream software applications to produce company brochures and marketing materials, they would want to convert their digital files to professionally printed brochures. To fill this void, Andrew would eventually create a user-friendly web site for businesses and change his company's name to PrintingForLess.com in 1999.

His vision was a custom Web site (not just a shopping cart site) that would allow his customers to fill out simple online forms, request the number of copies, size, and folds, and have the pricing on the screen automatically change with the specs. He wanted to allow small businesses to order

professionally printed materials directly from their desktop. At the time, this was a big technology challenge.

Outside developers using Oracle and Microsoft products bid about \$1 million to do the work, and Andrew didn't have that kind of cash. So, he hired a Wall Street refugee and a programmer fresh out of school who built the initial system for about \$100,000.

Customers liked the system, which allowed them to send files in a wide variety of formats and software languages, but inevitably they had questions that required human intervention. Simple fix – Andrew made the company's phone number more prominent on the website, and installed three-person teams to be responsible for each print job from start to finish.

Originally, PrintingForLess.com (PFL) only offered brochures. Now products include postcards, posters, business and greeting cards, newsletters, stationary, catalogs, booklets and custom pieces such as CD covers. At the PFL website, visitors can get instant estimates, place orders, track job status and get unmatched technical and customer support.

Named to Inc. Magazine's 500 fastest growing companies in the United States for a third year in a row, PFL is a leader in the field of internet based color printing companies. Andrew Field has grown PFL from 6 employees in 1999, to 125 printing professionals today, and has become the country's largest online seller of commercial printing. Gross sales have increased from a modest \$600,000 annually, to over \$20 million, and sales aren't the only thing on the rise at the Livingston based company. PFL has put together a financing package and purchased 70 acres near I-90 in Livingston and begun construction on a new 46,500 sq. foot state of the art printing facility and office set for completion in May 2006.

Through his leadership and direction of the company's operations and progressive business practices, Andrew Field has built a dynamic culture that both empowers and inspires his employees for success. He was recognized by Fortune Small Business and Winning Workplaces as a winner of the 2005 Best Bosses Award for developing innovative approaches that have created a high-performance workplace. Field credits his employees for contributing to the dynamic environment where great ideas and disciplined execution have made PrintingForLess.com a leader in satisfying customer's needs.

Andrew Field and PFL contribute to a variety of local and national charities including, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Eagle Mount, Stafford Animal Shelter, Special Olympics of Montana, Montana Ballet Company, and many more. Field serves on the board of Caspari Montessori Institute and Golden Helix, Inc., a Bozeman, MT based software start-up. Additionally, he is a member of the Young President's Organization and Pioneer Entrepreneurs, a Bozeman, MT based forum for local business leaders.

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